



IMPORTANT DATES AND REMINDERS

- Saturday, March 21, 2015
Springfest Family Fun Day: 10 am-3:00 pm
- March 23-April 10, 2015
PARCC Testing, Grades 3-8
- Wednesday, April 1, 2015 5:45 - 7:00 pm
Outside the Lines Meeting
- Thursday, April 2, 2015
Ancient Nubia Potluck: 9:15-10:15 am
- Friday, April 3, 2015
Good Friday: NO SCHOOL

March 20, 2015

Volume 18, Issue 22

PARCC

Dear Families, Students, Staff, and Friends,

March 24-April 9, Mission Hill students in grades three to eight are scheduled to take an assessment selected by the Boston Public Schools called PARCC (Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers).

This is a new test, connected to the new national Common Core standards, and it is being piloted in some districts in Massachusetts and in some other states. The Massachusetts Department of Education is considering it as an eventual replacement for MCAS. Your child's participation in this test will help the state determine whether this is suitable test to adopt in the future.

I want to make sure that you are aware that your student's participation would be for district and state data-collecting purposes only. Your student's score will not be part of his or her record in any way.

At Mission Hill School we believe that standardized tests are just one way—often a very limited way—to measure student achievement. We stand behind our wide range of assessments and our curricula. We have confidence in our practice of observing students as they do daily work, looking at student work samples, and charting progress through assessments that are connected to learning goals set by students, teachers and families.

Some families have asked whether the test is required. As a parent or guardian you have the right to determine whether your child participates in the PARCC pilot test or not. Consider your child as well as the information needed by the state to determine whether this test should be adopted as an annual assessment. I encourage families to make their own decisions.



KINDERGARTEN

Room 108

During my observations of GERALYN McLaughlin in the classroom, I have never heard her utter the words “Good job”. GERALYN’s affirmations of children’s achievement or success, always follows with exactly what the child has done. My professor offered the same suggestions from ALFIE KOHN’s article *Five Good Reasons to Stop Saying “Good Job!”* I have, as others, said to children “Good job”, unaware of the implications it might have. After reading the article and subsequently observing different ways to support children, I am more mindful and correct myself before those words leave my mouth. Children’s approval should be as real as the behavior, and not undermined with a passive annotation. The phrase implies that the adult is only concerned with the child complying and does not appreciate the regulatory aptitude the child used to follow

through on a particular task or behavior.

When adults respect a child by addressing exactly what he or she has done, it opens a door of trust and esteem for the child. Verbalizing an action acknowledging a child’s specific success and tells the child that you are genuinely attentive. I will always reflect and appreciate children and their cognitive, social emotional and physical processes, by not using the words, “Good Job”.

For additional information visit www.alfiekohn.org/article/five-reasons-stop-saying-good-job/
-Lucian Campbell

Room 106

Spring is in the air! I am looking forward to spending more time outside in the next few weeks.

In preparation for the warmer weather, Andrew from the Boston Nature Center has been planting vegetables, herbs, and flowers with the Sparkling Birds. The students

started by choosing what they wanted to plant, and sowing the seeds in a cup filled with soil. We have been keeping the plants under the grow light, and making sure to give them plenty of water. Some have already started germinating! Once the ground outside had thawed and the temperature is warm enough, we will transfer the new plants to outside gardens in our schoolyard.

Another exciting activity Andrew has started with our classroom is our new worm bin! The children learned how to begin a worm bin, and it is now their responsibility to make sure the soil stays damp and the worms have enough food to eat. We spent time discussing what the worms do and do not like to eat. Stop by to ask the experts in room 106 and check out the worms!

-Liz & Stephanie

Room 107

With our pyramid almost done, a sarcophagus painted gold and our tree nearly complete, reading books like *Tut-Tut* from the Time Warp Trio series and *Mummies in the Morning* from the Magic Tree House series have added to and inspired both projects and our students and imaginative play. The Princess Dragon Hot Wheels have been adorning themselves with golden necklaces and bracelets, wrapping themselves in golden material proclaiming, “I’m a Nubian princess!” or “I’m the king”. In addition, Wren’s family lent us a mummy costume that has added to the dramatization of some of the stories we have heard about the pyramids.

As our students continue to browse our books about Nubia and Egypt, the pictures constantly spark their



Children put the final touches on the sock dolly mummy in room 109.



Khi stabilizes a sarcophagus with tape.

interests. They are beginning to wonder about many things and draw their own conclusions as they make statements and ask questions like, “Is that what the boats looked like?” “What! There were black people in Egypt?” “If you clear out the block area, we are going to build a boat like we did last year!” “I know how the Egyptians walked!” Over the next few weeks we will clear up some misconceptions and delve deeper into other areas of interest.

-Jada Brown & Jo-Ann Hawkesworth

Room 109

Our mummy is now encased in its final resting place. Moxie sculpted a clay amulet and placed it around our sock dolly mummy. Then, the children all got together and cut up the boxes that they brought in. They began to cut and tear them so that they could shape them around the mummy to make a mummy case. They began by laying the mummy inside of some boxes, shaped the sides, and then closed the tops. Some kids began to figure out a better way

so that they could all be involved so they started an assembly line. Two children ripped pieces of tape, two kids took the tape to the table, and then the rest started taping and shaping the boxes so they covered the entire mummy. At the end, the entire mummy was sheltered inside its sarcophagus. The process was documented in pictures and in words. Our next step is to paper mache the sarcophagus and paint it once it is ready.

-Jenny, Renee, Meira, and Angelina

GRADES 1 & 2

Room 204

“When was he the king?”

“When was he born?”

“Did he have a family?”

“Where did he live?”

“How did he die?”

Students have asked these questions, and many more, as we practice reading and writing nonfiction texts. Last week, our entire class focused on King Tut, generating lists of what we think we know, and what we want to know. Students then used nonfiction books and articles to investigate their research questions, and wrote and drew about their findings to make a class book about King Tut. This week, groups of students have chosen their own Egyptian or Nubian Queen or King to study. As we ask questions and learn about these important people of the past, we also ask questions of ourselves about our learning process: What do I want to know? How could I find out? What makes a good source? These questions guide us in becoming thoughtful explorers of the past. We can't wait to share what we've found!

-Heron Russell, Student Teacher

Room 205

Room 205 is starting exciting new endeavors for our project time this week: museum creation! We are completely transforming our classroom into a museum specializing in different aspects of Nubian culture. It is planned to be a comprehensive experience with knowledgeable student tour guides who will lead you through the exhibits.

Students have been working extremely hard during project times to ensure our museum will be up to par and inspired by actual museums we have visited. Each group (art, building, daily life, and writing) has been working on individual and small group projects to contribute to our Nubian museum.

Now, our task is to create the museum to include our hard work. Groups such as ticket collectors, curators, information desk, and tour guides



Students of all ages are making personalized paddle dolls in the art room.

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have been chosen to further this process in an organized way and will begin working hard this week. Our museum is scheduled to open for classes to visit on Monday March 30th and families on Thursday, April 2nd. Please be on the lookout for invitations and tickets!

– Aliza Strock, Student Teacher

Room 217

On our 2nd trip the MFA students are bringing questions they are hoping to get answered. Children have selected a topic they are learning more about and making connections between their topic and the research of their classmates. Lucas and Noah are learning more about the myths and stories told in the Kingdoms of the Nile. At the MFA they want to ask: Why did the deities usually have animal heads? Rui and Jackson are asking: How did they make the food they ate? to learn more about food in Ancient Egypt and Ancient Nubia. Another group (Luis, Tyler, and Brian) is researching games and sports. They want to ask: What kinds of games did they play with? Remembering how we looked at the mummy of Nesmutaatneru at the MFA during our last visit, James, Jahlimar, and Lumi want to know: Where is the pyramid of Nesmutaatneru located? Field trips, like our trip to the MFA, give children real-world opportunities to develop their research skills -- asking questions and synthesizing new information.

–Emma Fialka-Feldman

GRADES 3 & 4

Room 207

Drum roll please...I'm excited to announce that room 207 has selected a new class name. Many new names



Introducing, in room 207, the Spectacular 22!

were considered, including the The Cool 22, The Ultimate Fantastic 22, and The Fire Dragons. However, after a close vote the decision was made.

We are now known as the Spectacular 22! After the vote, students got right to work creating a sign for our room and helping our newest community members get settled into classroom routines. In addition to attending to the basics of getting a new class started, I have been so warmed by all of the acts of kindness I have witnessed this week from both children and adults. The days have been filled with lots of hugs between new class members, invitations to join in activities, and MHS adults offering support to the classroom. The 3rd/4th grade has been full of transitions this year, particularly for room 207. Since joining the class in December, I have been consistently impressed by the students' flexibility, resiliency, and willingness to embrace change in the community. Amina and I are confident that the remainder of the

year will be filled with new friends, excitement about our learning, and a vibrant classroom community.

–Kristina Voss

Room 216

Coming next week...

GRADES 5&6

Room 210

Here are a few of our End of the Week Reflections. Enjoy.

“Something that went well this week was getting the dance together and trying not to mess up. But we did good and we nailed it even though we were nervous and scared. Another thing that went well this week was going outside (for recess).”

“Next week I am going to try to be better at math and listen when Nakia is reading in the meeting area. And also I will try to be a better listener.”

“I would feel more comfortable if people would mind their business and not annoy people. I would feel more comfortable if I could get a

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little more personal space. I would leave me alone when I wanna be alone”

“Something I learned this week was that some people learn differently. I also we have differnt times doing particular things...”

“Something that went well this week’s is the Teach-in because I had a lot of fun doing all the stuff. I learned a lot of things about myself and other stuff”

“I do not want to do the reflection because I want to sit over there”

“We had a school Teach-in on Wednesday. I watched a movie called *Journey into Dyslexia*. One of the people in told a story about them stealing a microscope and the teacher didn’t think it was him because the teacher thought he was too stupid. . I really liked that story.”

-*Nakia, June, Meron, & Elsa*

Room 215

“Keep your eyes on me,” Doumas LaFontant admonishes Henry. “Forget about everyone around us. This is you and me; I am looking at you the whole time, you look at me.” “Jinga!” shouts Doumas. This is how students in Grades 5/6 were introduced to capoeira angola in Nakia’s room on Tuesday. Doumas, a member of the Association for the Study of Classical Afrikan (‘k’ and not ‘c’) Civilization, performed, lectured and opened our appreciation of Nubian culture in contemporary society. “Nubia is in Hip Hop music, dance and literature. It is in capoeira, transported and reinvented in Brazil!” Doumas, after the initial curiosity about his big hat and thick hair, became a friend, a fellow scholar, exchanging his interpretations and perceptions of Nubia with our



Doumas, LaFontant, a member of the Association for the Study of Classical Afrikan (‘k’ and not ‘c’) Civilization, performed and lectured in room 215.

students who have their own understandings. The exchanges happened for almost 2.5 hours! There was drumming, note-taking, dancing - was that “Roar” being sung to the heartbeating djembe?

-*Abdi, Angela & Carlos*

GRADES 7&8

Room 213

Last week, we watched a video of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. giving a speech at Barratt Junior High School in Philadelphia, PA in October, 1967 – 6 months before he was assassinated. King titled the speech, What Is Your Life’s Blueprint?. Although the video was in black and white and a little grainy, the effect of King’s words in our classroom was powerful. Imagine being a kid and learning that Dr. King took time to write and deliver a speech with a message that was just for kids your age.

After watching the speech, we worked in small groups to take apart the text. We learned the meaning

of words that were new to many of us: invoke, stigma, lure, endeavor, sociological, scintillating, profundity. We noticed different language patterns, like King’s use of 3’s: “...as the pattern, as the guide, as the model...” and “...your own dignity, your own worth, and your own somebodiness...”

Now we are selecting ideas from the speech that mean the most to us. Throughout this theme, we are connecting the threads of identity, conflict, and legacy as they appear in the past, present, and future.

-*Ann Ruggiero & Letta Neely*

Room 214

As we were getting ready to leave the classroom for the library Alpha asked me, “Reginald, can we check out as many books as possible?” As an avid reader, he was excited when I answered yes. On previous trips to the library, I asked students to only check out one book.

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With only one book, it decreases the possibility that a student will decide that they do not like a book after only reading a few pages. However, we've run into another problem lately, students finished their book before we our scheduled trip to the library and had a hard time finding another book to read from the classroom.

There has been a significant shift in our attitudes toward books in room 214. We are not only reading more but also discussing our books with each other and swapping books. we are also building a positive relationship with the library. It's also exciting that students are visiting the library on their own between our scheduled class visits. I'm already looking forward to our next library trip as a class.

-Reginald Toussaint, Carol East-José, & Emmanuel St. Vil

SCHOOLWIDE NEWS

Family Council News

All families at MHS are members of the Family Council! Contact Co-Chairs Bridget Lee- bridgetelee@gmail.com or Rachel Goldsmith- rachego@mindspring.com with questions or for more information.

April 1, 2015: Outside the Lines. Our second meeting for families with children with special needs and anyone else who wants to be part of the discussion. In room 203 from 5:45 - 7:00 pm.

April 9, 2015: Family Council Meeting (working session) in room 203 from 5:45 - 7:00 pm.

Drivers Tests vs. School Tests

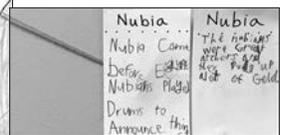
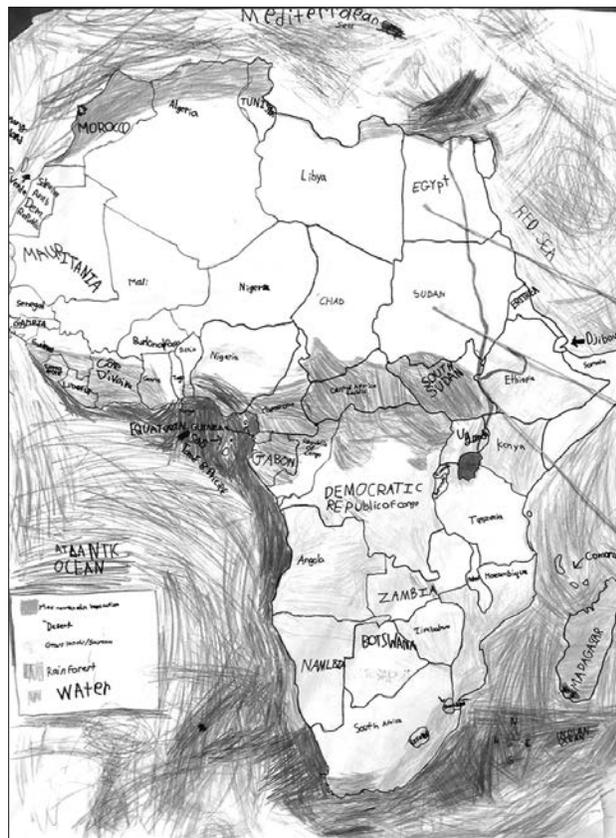
I assume we all agree that the driving part of the driver's test—the road test—is more important than the short-answer quiz. Why isn't that the case for schooling?

If driver education reformers decided that, given the number of road accidents it was time to make tests harder, we might applaud. But if what they meant to do was just eliminate the road test (too expensive, too open to bias) and replace it with a much tougher multiple choice quiz, we might pause and wonder. Especially if the quiz was on how carburetors work, how much pressure each tire can take, the best of four multiple choice ways to respond on an icy road, the science of four-wheel drive, and an essay on driving courteously. More kids would fail, so proponents might argue it must be tougher. Critics might suggest it was "tougher" but pointless. But one thing is for sure: Not getting a driver's license would cause havoc for many people whose jobs depended on it. That's how many of us here at MH feel about high stakes standardized multiple choice reading, math, history and science tests.

-Deborah Meier

From the *Mission Hill Newsletter*, April 2, 2004

**Don't forget
the schoolwide
Ancient Nubia
Potluck breakfast
on Thursday, April
2, 2015 from 9:15 to
10:15 am!**



A map of Africa created by students in Ashleigh's class.

Ayla Gavins, *Principal*
Deborah Meier, *Founder*

John McDonough, *Interim Superintendent*

Mission Hill K-8 School
A Boston Public Pilot School

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Prizes, Raffles,
Activities, and
other Incentives



Yoga
Gymcraftics
Zumba
100 Mile Club
and Others

SPRINGfest

Come join us for Healthy Family Fun Day!

Saturday

March 21, 2015

12:00–3:00 pm



*Mission Hill School
20 Child Street, Jamaica Plain*



Premios, Rifas,
Actividades, y
Otros Incentivos



SPRINGfest

Yoga
Gymcraftics
Zumba
100 Mile Club
y Otros

*Ven y únete a nosotros para la
Familia Saludable Día de Diversión!*

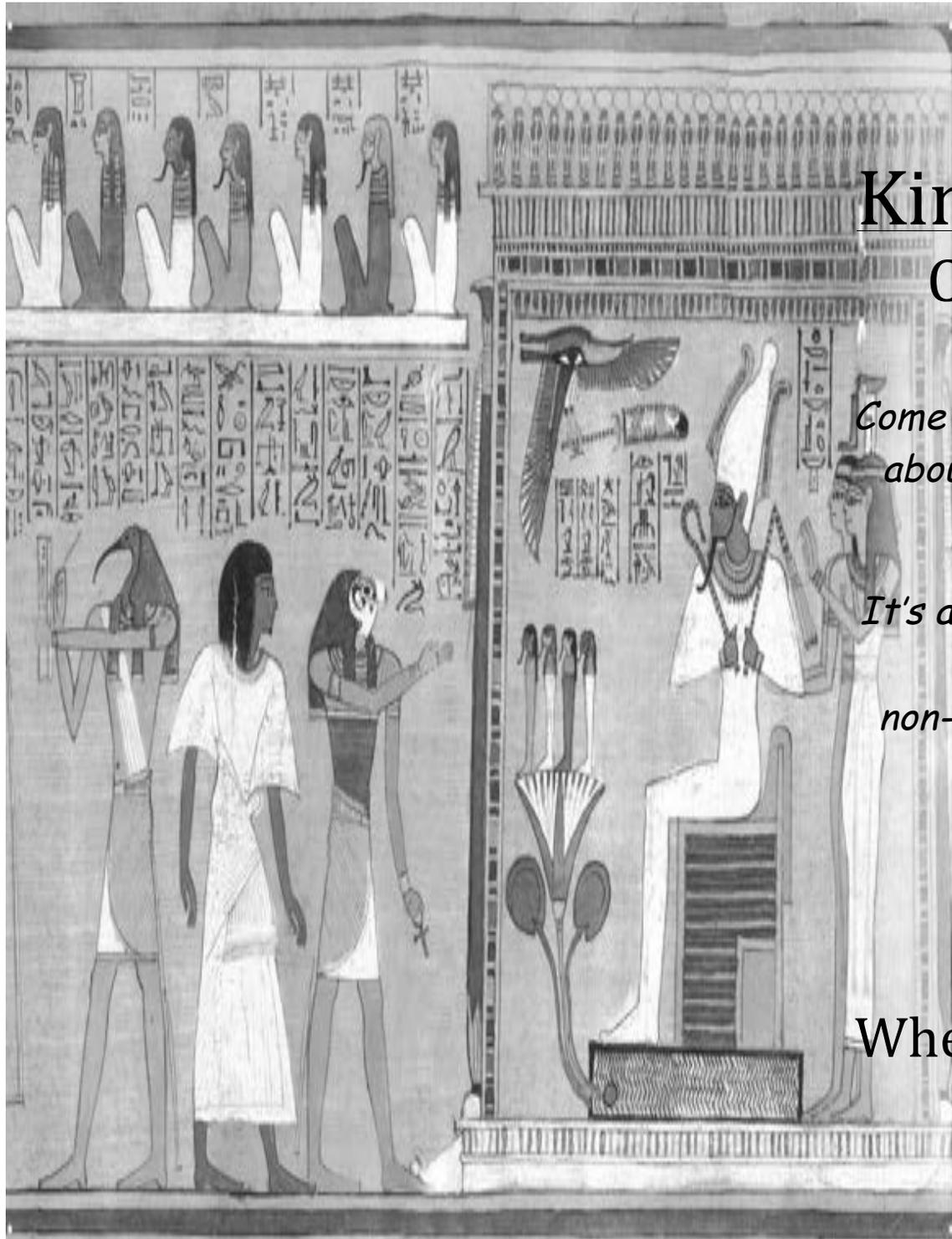
sábado

21 de marzo 2015

12:00–3:00 pm



*Mission Hill School
20 Child Street, Jamaica Plain*



Kingdoms of the Nile Curriculum Breakfast

*Come celebrate all we have been learning
about this fascinating ancient culture
during the past few months.*

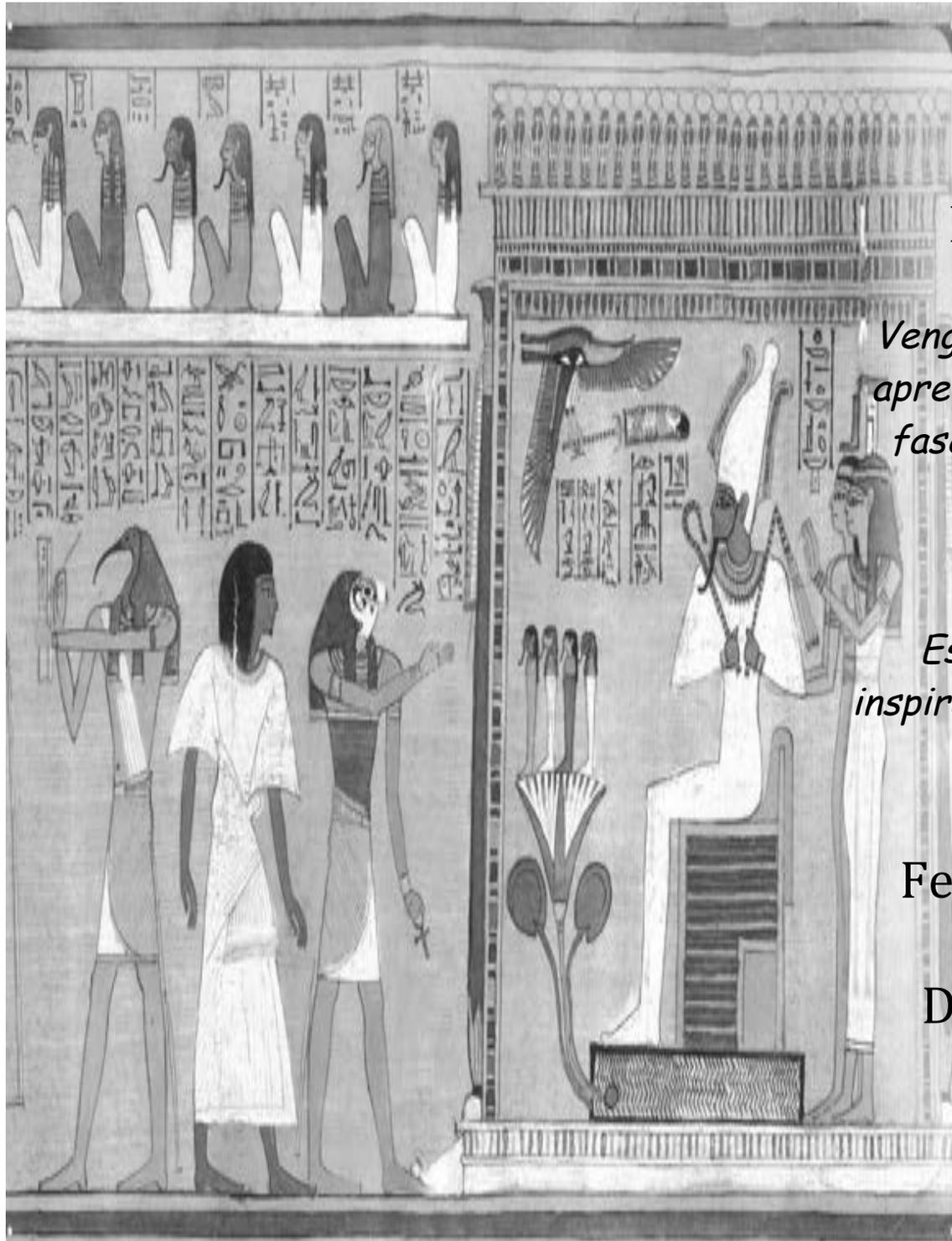
*It's a **potluck**, so bring a theme inspired
or
non-theme inspired dish to share with
our community.*

Date: April 2, 2015

Time: 9:15-10:00

Where: K-Quad and 2nd Floor

See you there!



Reinos del Nilo

Desayuno del Currículo

Venga celebran todo que hemos estado aprendiendo sobre esta cultura antigua fascinante durante los últimos meses pasados.

Es una comida, así traiga un plato inspirado o no por el tema para compartir con nuestra comunidad.

Fecha: El 2 de abril de 2015

Tiempo: 9:15-10:00

Donde: K-quad y 2do piso

¡Les ver allí!